

To: Members of the House Health Policy Committee
From: Chris Mitchell, Senior Vice President, Advocacy
Paige Fults, Director, Advocacy
Date: Jan. 31, 2018
Re: House Bill 5439 – Psychiatric Bed Registry
Position: Support

The Michigan Health and Hospital Association (MHA) supports House Bill (HB) 5439, which creates an inpatient psychiatric bed registry.

Hospitals emergency departments (EDs) are designed to deliver initial care and treatment to patients for a wide range of illnesses and injuries, some of which may be life-threatening and require immediate attention. It is common for hospital EDs to serve as the entry point to care for patients with mental illness.

Due to the limited number of psychiatric beds in Michigan, patients in need of inpatient mental health services are often “boarded” in the ED until an open psychiatric bed becomes available. Currently, community mental health and hospital staff locate available beds by personally calling facilities and checking for bed availability, creating bottlenecks in the system due to administrative tasks and delaying the delivery of psychiatric services for the patient. In addition, boarding behavioral health patients consumes scarce ED resources, contributes to overcrowding and may cause delays in the amount of time that all ED patients spend waiting for care and treatment.

HB 5439 seeks to address this problem by establishing an online list of open psychiatric beds to be updated regularly by inpatient psychiatric hospital facilities as patients are discharged and beds become available. A real-time psychiatric bed registry could help facilitate timely transfer and admission into an inpatient psychiatric bed, which in turn ensures that a patient is getting the care he or she needs in the most appropriate setting.

HB 5439 is intended to improve patient care, ease overcrowding in emergency rooms and expedite the process of connecting patients with psychiatric hospitals and hospital units. The MHA supports the intent of HB 5439 and asks the Committee to report out the bill with a favorable recommendation.

Please contact Paige Fults (pfults@mha.org) at (517) 703-8616 at the MHA if you have further questions regarding MHA’s position on HB 5439.

Brian Peters, *Chief Executive Officer*